

Do You Have a Family Disaster Plan?

I. Gather Information About Hazards

Gather information about hazards. Contact your local National Weather Service office, emergency management office, and American Red Cross chapter. Find out what types of disasters could occur and what you should do. Learn about your community's methods of warning people and evacuation plans. Ask your insurance agent about flood insurance. Find out what you can do to protect your home from the effects of natural hazards that could occur where you live.

Meet with your family to create a plan. Discuss the information you have gathered. Pick two places to meet: a

spot outside your home for an emergency such as a fire, and a place away from your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Choose an out-of-town family member or friend as your family check-in contact for everyone to call if the family gets separated, and a backup out-of-neighborhood friend in case the first one does not answer. Discuss what you would do and how to do it if advised to evacuate. Use one vehicle only to avoid getting separated and reduce traffic jams. Decide what measures you will take to make your home less vulnerable to disasters.

II. Implement Your Plan

1. Post emergency telephone numbers by phones and in address lists each person carries with them. Include cell phone numbers of family and contact-points.
2. Install safety features in your home, such as smoke alarms and fire extinguishers.
3. Inspect your home for potential hazards such as items that can move, fall, break, or catch fire, and correct them.
4. Make physical changes that will make your home less vulnerable; install check-valves and hurricane shutters; strap the hot water heater to wall studs.
5. Have your family learn basic safety skills such as CPR/Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and first aid; how to use a fire extinguisher; and how and when to turn off water, gas, and electricity at the main switches and valves. Know how to operate a NOAA Weather Radio.

6. Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 or your local Emergency Medical Services number.
7. Keep emergency supplies in your home sufficient for 3 days to a week, if your area has ever lost basic water, electricity and gas service for a week or longer. Assemble a disaster supplies kit with things you will need if you have to evacuate. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks or duffel bags.
8. Keep important family documents in a waterproof and fire-resistant container.
9. Keep a smaller emergency kit with seasonal supplies, tools, and clothes in the trunk of your car.
10. Each person who has a cell phone should carry it and keep it turned on to receive calls in any emergency situation.

III. Prepare a Disaster Kit to Include:

- At least a 3-day water supply (one gallon per person per day)
- Food that won't spoil
- One change of clothing and footwear per person
- One blanket or sleeping bag per person
- First-aid kit
- Prescription medicines
- Emergency tools
- Battery-powered NOAA Weather

- Radio
- Portable radio
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Extra set of car keys
- Cash and credit card
- Special items for infant, elderly, and disabled family members.

IV. Practice and Maintain Your Plan

Ask questions to make sure each family member remembers meeting places, telephone and cell phone numbers, and safety rules. Conduct drills. Test smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries at least once a year. Test and recharge fire extinguishers according to manufacturer's instructions and make sure family mem-

bers remember how to operate them. Replace emergency food and water supplies once every six months. Contact your local National Weather Service office, American Red Cross chapter or emergency management office for a copy of a Your Family Disaster Plan (FEMA, L-191 or ARC4466).

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